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Orlando Sentinel

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Weather

8 A.M.: 65°
2 P.M.: 81°
5 P.M.: 79°
CHANCE OF RAIN: 0%

WEATHER REPORT, C8

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News Now

LOCAL & STATE

◆ **THE ST. MARKS LIGHTHOUSE'S** 82-foot tall white towers over the salt marsh of the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Workers are now in the second phase of restoring the structure, built in 1842. **B1**

◆ **CORRINE BROWN** wants to be free now as she appeals her sentence on tax and fraud charge. Prosecutors, of course, think differently. **B1**

◆ **SANTA ARRIVES EARLY** at an Apopka-area drug rehabilitation facility for women, bringing gifts for 62 children who were able to visit their mothers and loved ones at the facility Sunday. **B1**

NATION & WORLD

◆ **SEN. JOHN MCCAIN** leaves the nation's capital to spend Christmas in Arizona with his family as he battles brain cancer, giving his Republican Party one less vote as it is expected this week to attempt to push through a contentious tax bill. **A3**

◆ **THE LAS VEGAS SHOOTING** that killed 58 and injured hundreds others, presents a unique problem: a massive victim pool with contributions coming in far below donations made for attacks such as those in Boston and Orlando. **A8**

BUSINESS

◆ **ADVANCE HOTEL BOOKINGS** in the Orlando area for the week between Christmas and New Year's are up by about 20 percent from a year earlier, according to Visit Orlando. **D1**

SPORTS

◆ **A LATE 19-0 RUN** and a big game from Mario Hezonja aren't enough to lift the scuffling Magic, who fall 114-110 to the Pistons in Detroit. **C1**

◆ **BLAKE BORTLES THROWS** 3 TD passes as the Jaguars end their playoff drought by routing the Texans 45-7. **C1**

TOP STORY

A return to peak home prices likely years away

Orlando market is slowing, analysts say

BY MARY SHANKLIN
Staff Writer

Orlando's housing market next year is expected to see reduced price growth that is likely to delay full recovery from the decade-old real estate bust for years, economists say.

Economists from the National Association of Realtors, Zillow and mortgage analyst HSH.com predicted slower price growth in Orlando, about 3 percent — down from double-digit increases in recent years. Stagnating prices could delay full recovery for another seven years, according to Zillow. Getting back to 2006 price levels is key for homeowners who purchased at that time and also for those trying to gain a bigger ownership stake in their homes.

Orlando price growth has been "quite strong" since the bottom in 2011, said Lawrence Yun, the National Association of Realtors' Chief Economist. The area's robust job growth should keep prices from collapsing but calmer days are ahead, he said.

"Orlando could see more

Please turn to ***PRICES, A10***

'THE CHANCE TO JUST BE A KID'

RED HUBER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Aidan Rawls, 4, left, of Apopka gets a little help from Lt. Bruce Williams of the Lake Mary Fire Department in operating a fire hose. Williams has given 14 sick children the chance to be a firefighter for a day.

Sick child lives firefighting dream

BY MARTIN E. COMAS
Staff Writer

Little Aidan Rawls slipped into red rubber boots, donned a black fire chief's hat and became a Lake Mary firefighter for a few hours.

The 3-year-old Apopka boy, who is battling cancer, rode last week in the front seat of a firetruck, blasting the horn as it roared through a Seminole County neighborhood. He worked a fire hose to put out imaginary fires at Station 37 and soared with a large grin as he was hoisted more than 50 feet in the air in the bucket of the station's tower truck.

"Hopefully this is something that he'll be able to remember for the rest of his life," said Clayton Rawls, Aidan's father. "I'm so happy that it's putting a smile on his face and giving him the chance to just be a kid."

Fire Lt. Bruce Williams jumped into action after hearing about the cheerful little boy, who was diagnosed Sept. 18 with

Please turn to ***FIRE, A10***

Neighbors thumbs-down on Enzian growth

BY RYAN GILLESPIE | Staff Writer

MAITLAND — Sandy Wessel can hardly see the Enzian Theater through thick brush behind her Lake Maitland Terrace condominium.

But a proposed two-screen expansion could bring the nationally known independent theater to within feet of her bedroom window, while also removing the foliage that keeps the noise out of her home, she says.

"I don't want to hear the short-order cooks screaming orders back and forth at 10 at night when I'm trying to sleep," said Wessel, who was among more than a dozen residents who opposed the expansion project at a Maitland planning and zoning meeting last week.

The $6.5 million plan also met opposition from residents of a neighborhood of single-family homes between U.S. Highway 17-92 and Lake Maitland, who

Please turn to ***ENZIAN, A2***

JACOB LANGSTON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Neighbors say a possible expansion of the Enzian Theater from one screen to three will cause noise and traffic problems.

Trump: 'No, I'm not' firing Mueller

GOP calls to wrap up probe keep growing

BY LAURA KING
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Amid increasing Republican attacks on Robert Mueller over the scope and impartiality of his investigation of Russian campaign meddling, President Donald Trump denied on Sunday that he had any intention of firing the special counsel.

"No — no, I'm not," Trump said on Sunday as he returned to the White House from Camp David, when reporters asked if he was considering ousting Mueller, as some conservatives have urged.

Earlier, the White House sought to tamp down speculation Trump would move directly against the special counsel, even as a senior Cabinet official noted the president had the authority to remove Mueller if he wished.

The president spoke as a new contretemps flared over the disclosure Saturday that the Mueller team possesses tens of thousands of emails from the Trump transition team, causing perhaps the most tense moment in the in-

Please turn to ***TRUMP, A3***

'Illegal' sites for gambling vex authorities

BY JASON RUITER
Staff Writer

Internet café gambling operations are proliferating in Central Florida and statewide after an attorney convicted in 2013 in a $300 million operation had his case dropped earlier this year, law enforcement officials say.

"Once that court case came out, you started to see them become more emboldened by this and they just said, 'Hey, let's go,'" said Volusia County Sheriff Mike Chitwood, whose deputies this summer raided the Hot Spot internet café in Ormond Beach and seized $10,000 in cash.

Earlier this month, weeks of undercover work in Lake County — dubbed Operation Jackpot — culminated in a raid of 10 internet cafes, the seizure of $200,000 in cash and the arrests of four people charged with keeping an establishment for gambling. Lake deputies believe there are as many as two dozen such operations in the county.

After state prosecutors dropped racketeering charges against Jacksonville attorney Kelly Mathis this spring, internet

Please turn to ***GAMBLES , A2***

Voices & Opinion

◆ **LOCAL VIEW:** Lake benefits from reworked Cemex pact. **A11**
◆ **LETTERS:** No CHIP funding another lawmaker letdown. **A11**
◆ **ASK AMY:** Giving a gift that lasts a lifetime — literacy. **B5**
◆ **DAVID WHITLEY:** Cabreras cap 'great week' with victory. **C1**
◆ **PAUL BRINKMANN:** Gated community project hits snag. **D1**

What To Do Today

JOLLY AND BRIGHT

Take in the sights, sounds and feel of the holidays at Light Up UCF, starting at 5 p.m. in front of the CFE Arena, 12777 Gemini Blvd. N., Orlando. Guests can enjoy an ice skating rink, take a trip down an ice slide, get a pic with Santa and more. Admission is free but activity prices vary. Check lightupucf.com for details. **THINGS TO DO, B2.**

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